

SECCS PROJECT LAUNCHED

Thanks to each and every one of you for the time you have offered during the last few months, as the State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (SECCS) Project has unfolded, in California. Your generous individual sharing of information regarding existing programs and your thoughtful perspectives on how to integrate services for children birth to 5 and their families have laid the foundation for the next twelve months of investigation that will culminate in the development of a Strategic Plan for California.

This email is the first of periodic pieces of communication that will give you "brief" updates on the progress of the SECCS Project. I will give you highlights of the Project and feature at least one model effort, in California.

Over the next few months, I will be introducing SECCS across the state and conducting focus groups with special interest organizations, parents and providers of services. If you have a group that would be interested in an overview of the SECCS Project or participation in a focus group, please contact me.

SECCS now has a website at <http://www.mch.dhs.ca.gov/programs/seccs/seccsfacts.htm> Feel free to establish a linkage with your own website to maintain current information.

If you are **not** interested in receiving future updates from the SECCS project, please email me back and I will remove your name. On the other hand, if you are interested in adding additional folks you think would benefit from the updates, please let me know and I will add their names. Your comments and suggestions are appreciated. Please feel free to correspond with me by email wewayne@kern.org or telephone 916 552-8742 or 661 204-8840.

Below is a description of the first of many programs that demonstrate Best Practices of Early Childhood Comprehensive Services in California:

THE FIRST EXCITING PROJECT TO HIGHLIGHT, IN THE FIELD OF EARLY CHILDHOOD COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES, IS ...

THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY EARLY IDENTIFICATION & INTERVENTION GROUP . . .

a collaborative to help its partner organizations, communities & others assure that:

- Every child in Los Angeles County gets developmental screenings – *early, often & with a high-quality screening tool*; and
- Any child needing help receives it at the earliest possible moment.

They are a catalyst that:

- Educates themselves, policymakers, parents, practitioners & others; and
- Develops, identifies, advocates & implements effective & culturally competent policies, practices & strategies.
- This Group first met in September 2003 to share information and strategies about consistent, appropriate developmental screening and needed follow-up services for all young children in Los Angeles County.
- Participants represent a cross-section of organizations and ideas in Los Angeles County – from the Departments of Health Services and Mental Health, to school systems, professional organizations, universities, foundations, program administrators, service providers, advocates and parents. While members bring different perspectives, strengths and resources, they share the goals of early identification and effective intervention.
- Current activities include will-building and skill-building, working to improve reimbursement policies for developmental screening, identifying programmatic ideas to foster policy improvements, and providing training and partnership opportunities for individuals and organizations throughout Los Angeles County.

They believe:

- Screening and identification alone are not enough. They must be followed by effective and culturally competent assessments, supports, services and interventions that promote healthy child development and school readiness.
- Good developmental screening and effective intervention address a broad range of concerns – including social-emotional, mental health and behavioral problems as well as developmental progress (or delays) and diagnosable disabilities. This work is about healthy development for *all children*.
- A “high-quality developmental screening tool” is one that is standardized, reliable, valid, accurate (that is, both sensitive and specific, correctly detecting children *with* and *without* problems), and peer-reviewed to assure that its qualities are accurately reported. Examples of high-quality tools are the three parental-report instruments the American Academy of Pediatrics cites as having excellent psychometric properties”: the Parents’ Evaluation of Developmental Status (the PEDS), the Ages and Stages Questionnaires, and the Child Development Inventories (Infant Development Inventory).

For more information, contact Margaret Dunkle, 818 952 6485 MCD729aol.com